

Frederic Remington

(REM-ing-tun) American

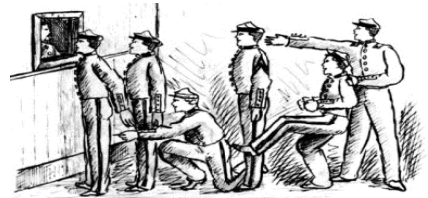
1861 – 1909

48



Frederic Sackrider Remington was an American painter, illustrator, sculptor, and writer who specialized in depictions of the Old American West and of U. S. Cavalry. He was born in New York to Seth Remington and Clara Sackrider. His father was a colonel in the Civil War, a newspaper editor and postmaster. One of Remington's great grandfathers was a saddle maker, and the Remingtons were fine horsemen. Frederic was related to Indian portrait artist George **Catlin** and cowboy sculptor Earl W. **Bascom**.

Frederic was an only child, active, large and strong, who loved to hunt, swim, ride, and camp. He was a poor student, which did not bode well for his father's ambitions for his son to attend West Point.



At **11** he attended a military school, his father hoping discipline would help his son focus, and perhaps lead to a military career. He took his first drawing lessons there. His classmates found him to be pleasant, a bit careless and lazy, good-humored, with a generous spirit, but not soldier material. He drew his classmates. He imagined a career as a journalist, with art as a sideline.



Remington attended Yale University's art school, the only male in the freshman year. He found football and boxing more interesting than formal art training, particularly drawing from casts and still life objects. He preferred action drawing. He left Yale in 1879

(18) to tend to his father who had tuberculosis, and who died after a year.

After the rejection of his engagement proposal to Eva Caten by her father, Remington became a reporter for his Uncle Mart's newspaper, and had other short-lived jobs. Living off his inheritance and modest work income, Remington spent time camping and enjoying himself.



At **19** (1881) he made his first trip west. He saw the vast prairies, the quickly shrinking buffalo herds, the still unfenced cattle, and the last major confrontations of U.S. Cavalry and native American tribes. The trip gave Remington a more authentic view of the West than some of the artists and writers who followed in his footsteps 25 years later, such as N. C. **Wyeth** and Zane **Grey**.

In 1883 **(22)**, Remington went to Kansas, to try the booming sheep ranching. He invested his entire inheritance but found ranching to be a rough, boring, isolated occupation lacking the finer things of Eastern life, and the real ranchers thought him lazy. In less than a year, he sold his ranch. Acquiring more capital from his mother, he returned to Kansas City to start a hardware business, but it failed, and he reinvested his remaining money as a silent, half-owner of a saloon. He went home, married Eva Caten in 1884 **(23)** and they returned to Kansas City.



She was unhappy with his saloon life and left him. With his wife gone and business doing badly, he started to sketch and paint in earnest, and bartered them for goods.

He soon had enough success selling his paintings to see art as a profession. His inheritance gone, but with faith in his new career, he returned home again, reuniting with his wife. Newspaper interest in the dying West was escalating. He submitted Western theme work to *Collier's* and *Harper's Weekly*. His first full page cover under his own name capturing the dramatic, heroic rescue of Corporal Edward Scott by Lt. Clarke during a fight with Apaches, appeared in *Harper's Weekly* in 1886 **(25)**. With financial backing from his Uncle Bill, Remington was able to pursue his art career and support his wife.

In 1886, Remington went to Arizona to cover the government's war against Geronimo. He never saw Geronimo, but his first year as a commercial artist earned him \$1,200, almost triple that of a typical teacher. He felt he had found his career.

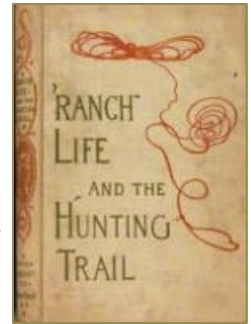


Sketch from a military school notebook. 1878 **(17)** sketch of Yale football player. Eva Caten. Harper's Weekly cover of Aug. 1886. *Geronimo and his Band Returning from a Raid into Mexico*, 1888 **(27)**.

His work began to sell well but garnered no prizes in art exhibitions. Masters like Winslow Homer and Eastman Johnson were considered his superiors. A trip to Canada in 1887 (26), produced illustrations of the Blackfoot, the Crow Nation, and the Canadian Mounties.



Remington received a commission to do 83 illustrations for Theodore Roosevelt's, *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail*. It was a big career boost. In 1888 (27), two of his works were placed on Postal stamps.



In 1889 (27), he was selected to represent American painting over Albert Bierstadt and he won a medal at the Paris Exposition.

A promotional campaign launched by *Harper's Weekly* for Remington was laced with blatant puffery (common for the time) claiming that he was a bona fide cowboy and Indian scout. The campaign raised Remington to equal top illustrators, Howard Pyle and Charles Gibson.

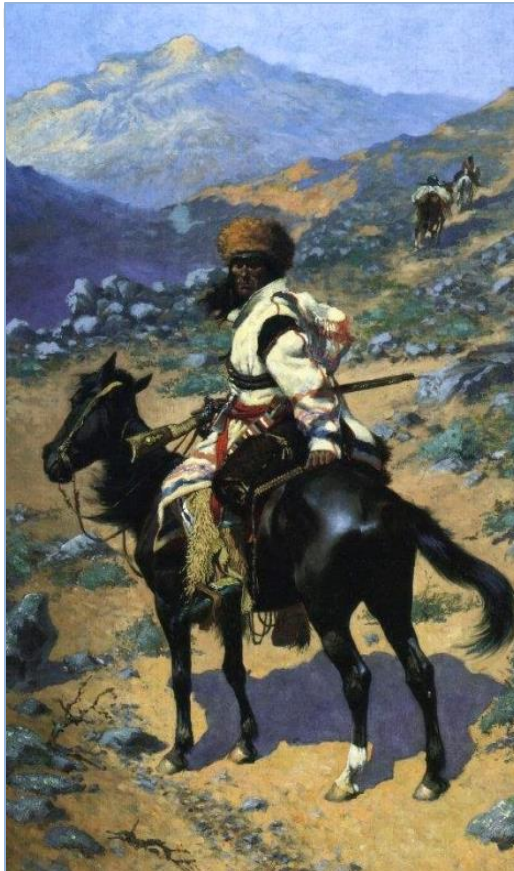
Remington's fame made him a favorite of the officers fighting the last Indian battles.

He got access to the

soldiers and their stories, and in turn the soldiers gained national publicity. Two of his 1889 paintings depicted cavalymen shooting at Apaches as they attempt to outrun them and enduring a sandstorm. Remington: "heat was awful and the dust... penetrates everything but the canteens. Men get sulky and go into a comatose state."



His first solo show of 21 paintings was well received in 1890 (29). His personality, "pseudo-cowboy" speaking manner, and "Wild West" reputation were strong social attractions. While the celebrity dinners he regularly attended were helpful to his career, prodigious eating and drinking caused obesity to become a problem for

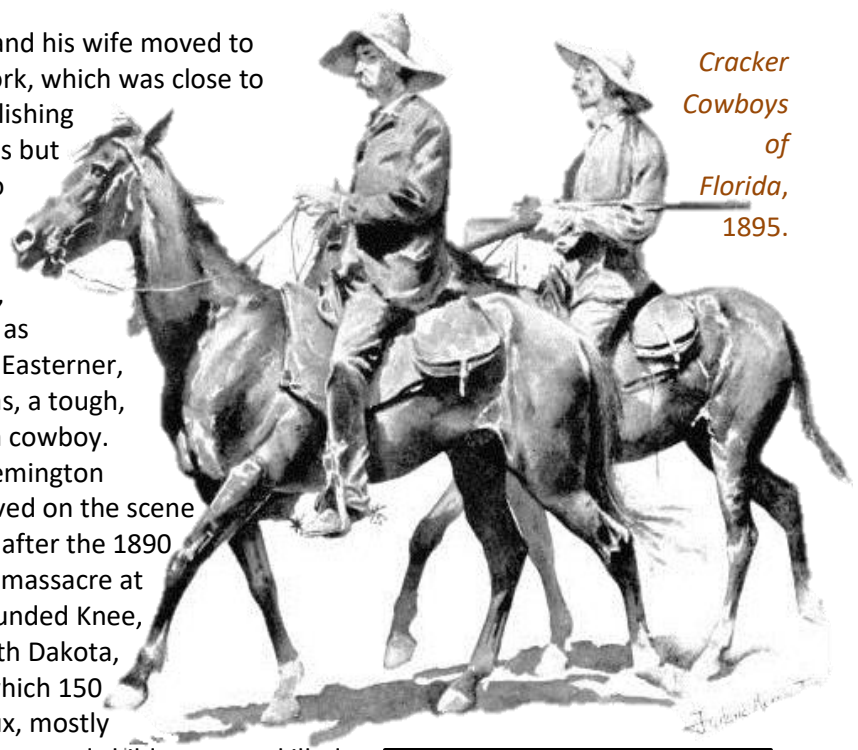


1888 (27):
\$.08: Troops Guarding Train.
\$.50: Mining prospector.
Mule Train Crossing the Sierras. 1889
(28): An Indian Trapper. Calvary in an Arizona Sandstorm.



*Cracker
Cowboys
of
Florida,
1895.*

In 1890 (29), Remington and his wife moved to New Rochelle, New York, which was close to New York City's publishing houses and galleries but rural enough to go horseback riding. Remington's *Self-Portrait on a Horse*, shows the artist not as he was, a pot-bellied Easterner, but as he wished he was, a tough,

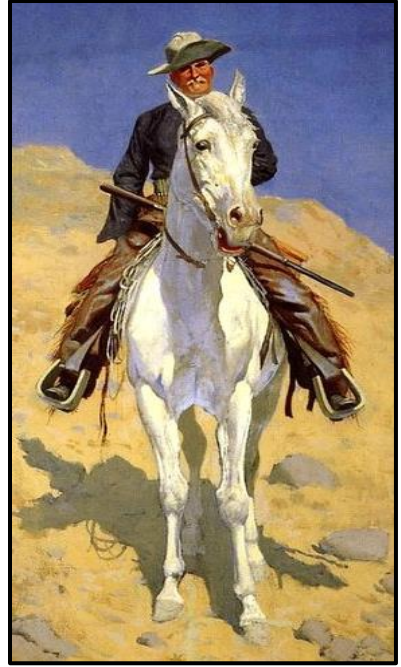


lean cowboy. Remington arrived on the scene just after the 1890 (29) massacre at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in which 150 Sioux, mostly women and children, were killed. He reported the event as "The

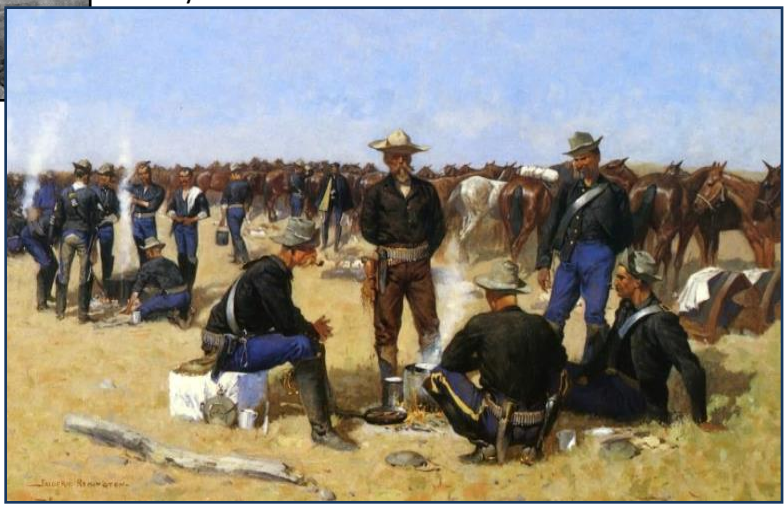
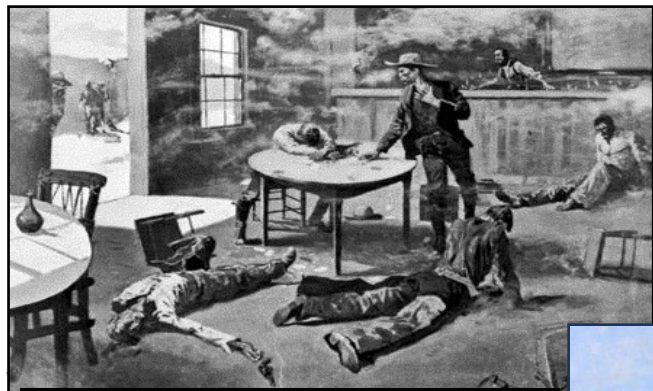


Sioux Outbreak in South Dakota," and the Army's actions as "heroic." Remington's attitude toward Native Americans was typical for the time. He thought them fearless, unfathomable, superstitious, ignorant, and pitiless.

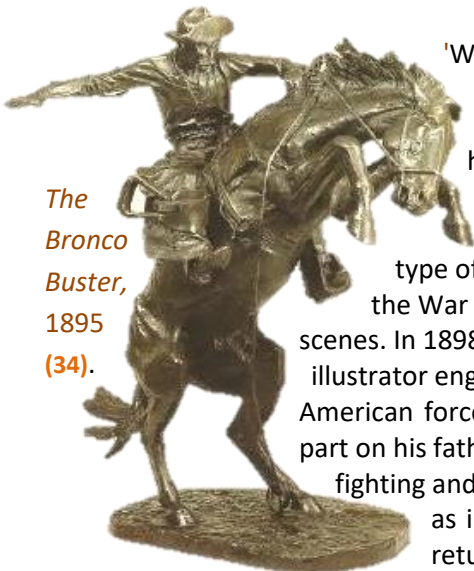
Remington took frequent trips around the U.S., Mexico, and abroad to gather ideas, but his military and cowboy subjects always sold the best. Gradually, he transitioned from Old West chronicler-artist to historian-artist. Remington wrote, "My drawing is done entirely from memory. I never use a camera now. The interesting never occurs in nature as a whole, but in pieces.



It's more what I leave out than what I add." Remington focused on outdoor action, not gambling and dance hall scenes. His *A Misdeal* is a rare instance of indoor cowboy violence.



Indian' estate in New Rochelle. 1890 (29): *His Last Stand*, *Self-portrait*. 1892 (31): *A Misdeal*, *A Calvaryman's Breakfast on the Plains*. *What an Unbranded Cow has Cost*, 1895

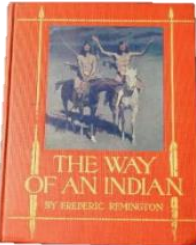


The Broncho Buster, 1895 (34).

'With help from friend and sculptor Frederick Ruckstull, Remington constructed his first model, a "broncho buster" where the horse is reared on its hind legs - a technically challenging subject. After months of overcoming the difficulties, he had a plaster cast made, then bronze copies, which were sold at Tiffany's. He was ecstatic about sculpting, and it earned him \$6,000 in three years.

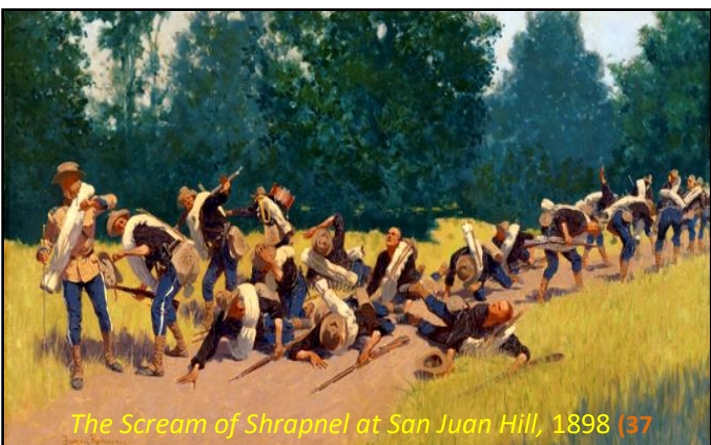
Remington became further immersed in military matters, inventing a new type of ammunition carrier; but his patented invention was not accepted for use by the War Department. His favorite subject for magazine illustration was now military scenes. In 1898 (37), his association with T. Roosevelt led to a war correspondent and illustrator engagement during the Spanish-American War. He witnessed the assault by American forces, including those led by Roosevelt. His heroic conception of war, based in part on his father's Civil War experiences, was shattered by the actual horror of jungle fighting and the deprivations he faced. His reports and illustrations focused on the troops, as in *Scream of the Shrapnel*, which depicts an ambush. When the Rough Riders returned to the United States, they presented their courageous leader, Roosevelt,

with Remington's statue, *The Broncho Buster*.

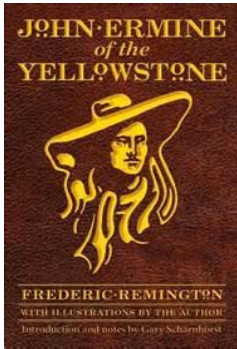


Remington wrote and illustrated a novel, *The Way of an Indian*. His protagonist, a Cheyenne named Fire Eater, is a prototype Native American as viewed by Remington and many of his time.

Returning to sculpture, he tried the lost wax method, a higher quality process than the earlier sandcasting method he had employed. In 1901 (40), *Collier's* was buying illustrations steadily. His popular nocturnal paintings, such as *A Taint on the Wind*, are more impressionistic.



The Scream of Shrapnel at San Juan Hill, 1898 (37)



Remington's 1902 (41) novel, *John Ermine of the Yellowstone*, gained modest success. He then focused solely on sculpture and painting. Remington sought to let his audience "take away something to think about -- to imagine."

In 1908 (47),

Remington created a large sculpture of a cowboy for Philadelphia's Fairmount Park.

Cowboy was



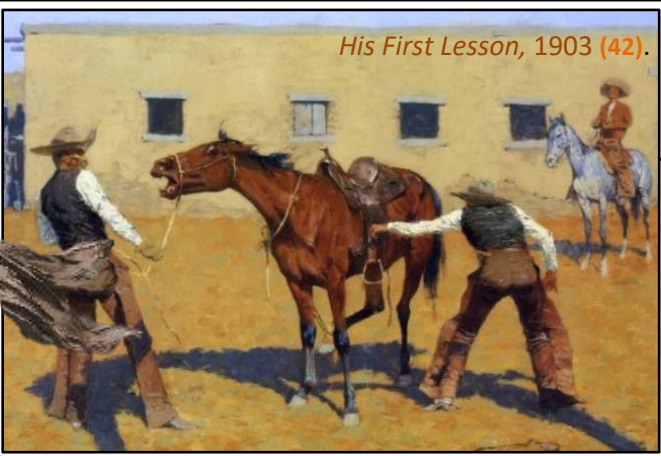
A Taint on the Wind, 1906 (45)



Remington's

first and only

large-scale bronze.



His First Lesson, 1903 (42).



1940 Famous American: Series postal Issue



The Old Stage Coach of the Plains, 1901 (40).



The financial panic of 1907 caused sales to slow. Remington tried to sell his home to get further away from urbanization. One night he made a bonfire and burned dozens of oil paintings which had been used for magazine illustrations (worth millions of dollars today), making a statement that he was done with illustration. In his final two years, he veered towards Impressionism, and he regretted being studio bound (declining health) and could not follow his peers who painted “plein air.”

Remington died after an appendectomy because extreme obesity (he weighed nearly 300 lbs) had complicated both the anesthesia and the surgery.

Remington was the most successful Western illustrator in the “Golden Age” of illustration. He focused on people and animals, with landscape usually of secondary importance, unlike Albert Bierstadt, and Thomas Moran, who glorified the vastness of the West. Remington was one of the first American artists to illustrate the true gait of the horse in motion. Previously, horses in full gallop were usually depicted with all four legs pointing out. The galloping horse became his signature subject. Also, noteworthy was



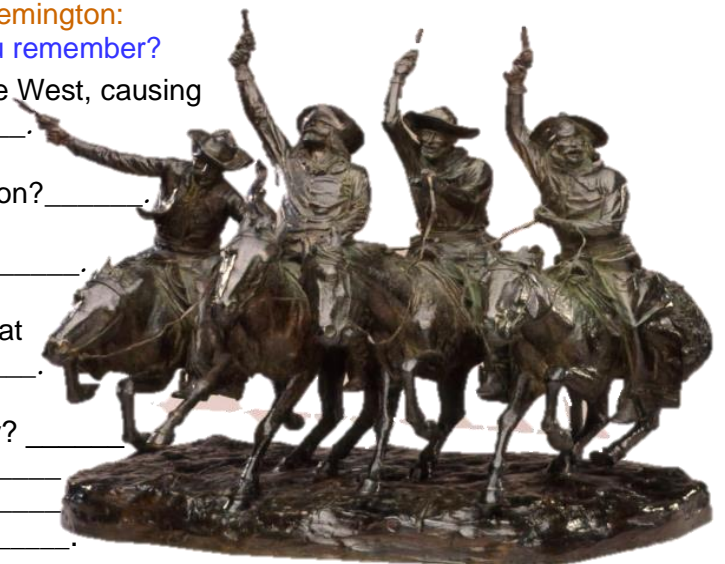
Remington’s invention of “cowboy” sculpture, still very popular among collectors of Western art.



Frederic Remington: What do you remember?

1. Frederic Remington grew up and lived his life in the West, causing him to have a great affinity for it. T or F ? _____.
2. His father wanted Frederic to go into what profession? _____.
3. Remington’s two favorite subjects were? _____.
4. In the end, Remington chose to concentrate on what two types of art? _____.
5. What do you know of Remington’s spiritual journey? _____

 _____.



The Smoke Signal, 1905 (44). Ridden Down, 1905 (44). Coming Through the Rye, 1902 (41).

Historical Timeline

What

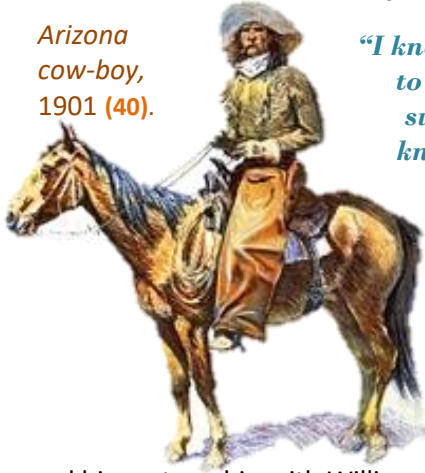
Who

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1861 – <u>Kansas statehood</u></p> <p>1861 - 65 – U.S. Civil War</p> <p>1863 – Gettysburg Address, <u>W. Virginia statehood</u></p> <p>1864 – Pasteurization, “In God We Trust” appears on coins</p> <p>1864, 67 – <u>Nevada, Nebraska statehood</u></p> <p>1865 – 13th Amendment (abolished slavery), Assassination of Abe Lincoln</p> <p>1865 – Pullman invents railroad sleeping car</p> <p>1865 - 77 – reconstruction of U.S.</p> <p>1867 – Nobel invents dynamite, U.S. buys Alaska from Russia, Strauss <i>Blue Danube Waltz</i></p> <p>1869 – Union Pacific Railroad completed</p> <p>1875 – Mark Twain <i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i>, Alexander G. Bell invents telephone.</p> <p>1876 – <u>Colorado statehood</u>,</p> <p>1882, 84 – R.L. Stevenson <i>Treasure Island</i>, Mark Twain <i>Huckleberry Finn</i></p> <p>1883 – Brooklyn Bridge opens</p> <p>1886 – Statue of Liberty dedicated</p> <p>1889 – North & South Dakota, Montana, Washington 1890: Idaho, Wyoming statehoods.</p> <p>1893 – Ford’s first automobile (first Model “T”’s in 1908), Sprague invents Electric Trolley</p> <p>1896 – <u>Utah statehood</u>, Marconi invents radio, First modern Olympic games (Athens, Greece)</p> <p>1898 – U.S. takes Philippines from Spain, H.G. Wells <i>War of the Worlds</i></p> <p>1903 – First powered flight by the Wright Bros., Ford Motor Co. founded</p> <p>1904 – Olympic games in St. Louis, USA</p> <p>1906 – San Francisco Earthquake</p> | <p>1835 – 1910 – Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain)</p> <p>1840 – 1893 – Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Russian</p> <p>1847 – 1931 – Thomas Edison</p> <p>1853 – 1890 – Vincent van Gogh</p> <p>1863 – 1947 – Henry Ford</p> <p>1880 – Edison’s electric light</p> <p>1879 – 1955 – Albert Einstein</p> <p>1882 – 1945 – F.D. Roosevelt</p> <p>1905 – Einstein’s Theory of Relativity</p> <p>1907 – <u>Oklahoma statehood</u></p> |
|--|---|



A Vaquero
c. unknown

Arizona cow-boy, 1901 (40).

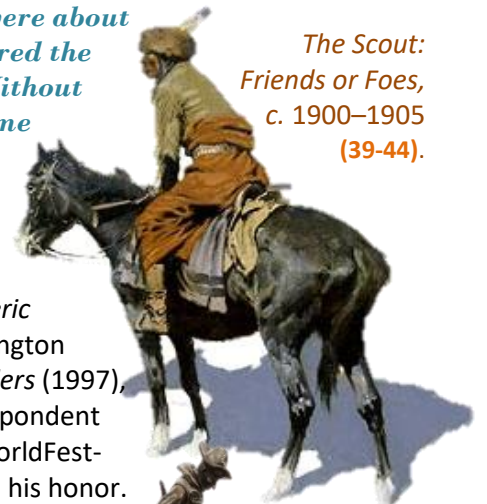


“I knew the wild riders and the vacant land were about to vanish forever... and the more I considered the subject, the bigger the forever loomed. Without knowing how to do it, I began to record some facts around me, and the more I looked the more the panorama unfolded.”
- *Frederic Remington*

Legacy: In 1991 the PBS series American Masters filmed a documentary called *Frederic Remington: The Truth of Other Days*. Remington was portrayed in the miniseries *Rough Riders* (1997), showing Remington's time as a war correspondent

and his partnership with William **Hearst**, during the Spanish-American War. WorldFest-Houston International Film Festival's main prize "The Remi Award" is named in his honor. There is a Frederic Remington Art Museum, High School, Post Office and Liberty Ship. This ship was used in World War II. The Remington Arts Festival is held in Canton, New York the first weekend in October. He is mentioned in the poem “Legacy of a Rodeo Man” by cowboy poet Baxter Black and in “The Last Cowboy Song” by The Highwaymen: “Remington showed us how he looked on canvas, and Louis L’Amour has told us his tale.”

Quiz Answers: 1. Remington, when not on assignment, lived in the east, mainly New York. 2. Military Career. 3. Military, Cowboys. 4. Painting, Sculpture. 5. Search did not reveal Remington as having any type of faith.



The Scout: Friends or Foes,
c. 1900–1905 (39-44).



The Stampede